

as I said, did not go as far as we really need to go.

The House did its bit and we did nothing in return. Now we get to the point where the debt limit, August 2, is upon us and we are supposed to vote. This morning at 3 a.m., apparently, legislation was finally put together. It was brought forth to the floor of the Senate. We will vote on it tomorrow morning, maybe noon, after a couple of hours of debate tomorrow. I am really uneasy about that. I am uneasy about what is contained in it.

What does it do? The good part is it reduces our spending by about \$2.1 trillion, maybe \$2.4 trillion. A more solid belief is we will reduce spending if Congress adheres to the guidelines. Over a period of years we tend to figure ways around the limits and constraints that are put on spending, but the plan is to reduce spending by \$2.1 trillion.

It is a step. It is better than more spending like we have been doing. In the last 2 years under President Obama, when the Democratic majority had 60 Senators in the Senate, non-defense discretionary spending went up 24 percent. The budget that the President submitted this year calls for a 13.5 percent increase in education for next year. Beginning October 1, fiscal year 2012, when we are in the worst financial shape ever, a 13.5 percent increase in spending? Is that common sense? Does that make reasonable judgment? Is that a reasonable judgment for America, when we are in a situation such as this?

It proposes a 9.5 percent increase in the Energy Department. It proposes a 10.5 percent increase in the State Department. It proposes a 60-percent increase in the Highway Department. And I'm told there will be a tax. I ask them: Mr. Secretary, what tax?

It will not be a gas tax.

I say: OK, we agree, it is not a gas tax. What is the tax?

We will talk about that.

The Congressional Budget Office said that is no income. You cannot say you have income to offset a big increase in high-speed rail and things like that if you do not have a source of revenue.

That is the situation in which we find ourselves. We have a deep, philosophical disagreement. The majority in this Senate and the President believe in spending. When I said 24 percent increase, that did not include the almost \$1 trillion in the stimulus package. It did not include that, all of which, every penny, was borrowed because we are in debt. When you spend this extra money, you borrow the money. We do not have it to spend.

However, we have a disagreement about where we are heading in our country. We should have had a full, glorious debate in the Senate. The Finance Committee should be looking at how to deal with taxes. The Appropriations Committee should be asking how can we reduce expenditures. Every authorizing committee needs to be looking at what they can do to do the job

better with less cost and more efficiently. The Budget Committee should be producing a budget that can be adhered to and passed, and that would bind the Senate to change the spending trajectory we have been on. But none of that has happened.

Instead, we have a bill to raise the debt limit. We are here because we spent so much money. We are up at the limit and if we do not raise the debt limit there will be substantial reductions in spending occurring pretty quickly. That is where we are.

I believe this bill raises serious questions about the Senate and how we do business. As I said, I warned that we would be at the eleventh hour when it all came forward.

One thing particularly concerning to me as the ranking member of the Budget Committee is that this bill deems certain budget numbers and in a way gets around, again, the budget process. It is going to give my colleagues, the Democratic majority, additional avenues to avoid producing a budget for the third consecutive year. I do not believe that is a healthy process.

Second, I ask my colleagues to think about this, and I will wrap up. I don't need to go into great detail about it. We are being asked to allow our leaders to select up to 12 people, 12 people who will be on a special committee and will have almost complete jurisdiction to work on any issue they choose. After they reach an agreement, if they do, that agreement will be presented to both Houses of Congress. There will be only 30 hours of debate, no opportunity to amend it, and there will be an up-or-down vote. I have to say the chance of an up-or-down vote being successful is very high, because the product that will come out of that committee will be in harmony with what the leaders who appointed the members of the committee desire, because the power to appoint is the power to control.

The committee will come back with this leadership proposal. It will be on the floor and it will be for an up-or-down vote and it is very likely to pass. Hopefully, it will have some good things in it. But it is unlikely that it would go past \$1.5 trillion in reduced spending over 10 years. That is roughly what they have been given. That on top of the \$900 billion that would go into effect immediately with the passage of the legislation would result in about a \$2.4 trillion total.

I believe that is an insufficient number. It is not close to what we have to do given our expected debt. Over 10 years the debt of the United States will increase an additional \$13 trillion. Reducing it \$2 trillion is not enough. We have heard the economists and others testify before the Budget Committee. Republicans and Democrats, say those reductions are not sufficient. Many economists said the absolute minimum was \$4 trillion, and this will be half that.

That legislation will then come before us. We will have an up-or-down

vote and presumably it will pass. The great traditions of the Senate, full, free, open debate will not occur to the degree that it ought to occur. The regular order will not be followed. Committees will have only an ability to send over advice if they so desire. As a result, I think we as Members of the Senate need to ask ourselves if we are getting pretty far away from the traditions of this body when you do not have public debate on a budget, you create a committee of limited numbers of people to produce legislation that cannot be amended and will only be up-or-down and no ability to have a supermajority vote, but a 50-vote, contrary to the normal process of this body.

For those reasons I believe, as a Senator and a ranking member on the Budget Committee who has wrestled with this for some time, I will not be able to support the legislation, although I truly believe it is a step forward, and I respect my colleagues who worked hard to try to bring it forward.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to a period for mornings business with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

EAST AFRICA FAMINE

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, many of us undoubtedly remember the heart wrenching images of starving Ethiopian and Somali children in the 1980s and 1990s. Those haunting images are hard to forget.

Unfortunately, I am compelled to come to the floor to draw attention to a tragic famine again confronting that part of the world.

On July 21, the United Nations declared "famine level food insecurity" in two regions in southern Somalia.

What does "famine level food insecurity" mean?

It means three tragic conditions are all occurring at the same time. First, malnutrition rates exceed 30 percent. Second, access to food and water is below subsistence levels for extended periods of time. And third, more than 2,000 to 10,000 people are dying of hunger each day.

Or more simply—a severe famine threatens the lives of 11 million people in east Africa today. The area affected by famine is expected to expand in coming weeks—and if not addressed soon—in coming months.

These millions of men, women, and children in Somalia and around the Horn of Africa are literally starving to death. These are children who will never reach their full potential because they do not have simple nutrients to fully develop—nutrients we take for granted.

Josette Sheeran, executive director of the World Food Program, carries around devastating photos showing what malnutrition does to the brain development of children.

She notes that when a child is born, about 60 percent of that baby's brain is formed and, if in the next 3 years in life they don't have adequate nutrition, their brains will not grow to maturity.

Her photos show the brain of a 3-year-old child who was properly nourished and that of a child who was malnourished. The actual volume of the brain of the malnourished child is as much as 40 percent smaller.

These are the innocent victims of hunger in east Africa and sadly, in still too many other corners of the globe.

I am happy to note that the U.S. is the largest bilateral donor of emergency assistance to this growing crisis. We have responded with over \$431 million in food and nonfood emergency assistance this year alone. And Secretary of State Clinton just announced an additional \$28 million in aid for people in Somalia and for Somali refugees in Kenya.

But more needs to be done and the United States cannot solve this crisis alone.

How did this happen again?

The Horn of Africa is rife with challenges, both natural and man-made. The region has had two insufficient rainy seasons culminating in the driest growing season recorded in 60 years.

Neither crops nor livestock are surviving, so food and commodities now sell at prices well beyond the reach of the country's people.

The price of red sorghum, a staple crop in Somalia, has increased more than 200 percent. In Kenya, the price of white corn has increased 58 percent. And in Ethiopia, the price of yellow corn has increased by more than 100 percent.

Millions of people, including in the neighboring countries of Kenya, Ethiopia, Djibouti, and Uganda are also at risk of starvation.

It's also a man-made crisis. Somalia's central government collapsed over 20 years ago. And al-Shabaab, a terrorist organization, has controlled much of southern Somalia since 2006.

Not surprisingly, the two areas most acutely experiencing famine are in southern Somalia, which is under al-Shabaab-control. Al-Shabaab recently expelled relief organizations, which effectively destroyed food-aid distribution channels—the lifeline for Somalis trapped under their control.

The mounting food crisis is also creating a refugee crisis that recognizes no borders. Already almost 25 percent of the Somali population—2 million out of 7.5 total million people—are displaced.

Kenya, with 3.5 million people who are vulnerable to food insecurity, is also already home to Dadaab, the largest refugee camp in the world.

This camp was built 20 years ago as a temporary shelter for 90,000 people.

Today it holds 400,000. And another 1,300 refugees arrive every day from Somalia.

In Ethiopia, a refugee camp called Dollo Ado is holding 120,000 people. But with a population of 3.2 million people affected by the famine, this camp is growing by 2,000 people per day.

Mogadishu, the hollowed out capital of Somalia, has become an oasis in southern Somalia because relief organizations are allowed to operate life-saving programs there. This is the city that thousands of people have fled in the past 20 years due to violence.

Can you imagine Mogadishu being an oasis?

Yet the capital city is seeing a daily influx of 1,000 to 1,500 people.

This network of emergency and humanitarian programs is the only hope for millions of people and deserves continued international support.

Stepping in to provide food, water and basic sustenance where there is none is not only the right thing to do, it is the American thing to do. We have always led and joined efforts to help the most vulnerable around the world and should continue to do so.

The House passed its Agriculture Appropriations for 2012 and chose to reduce the aid available for emergencies like these by 49 percent.

Thankfully, USAID is on the ground in Africa providing expertise, and Administrator Shah personally visited the region last week.

And the Feed the Future Program—which is modeled on the Global Food Security Act I sponsored with Senators LUGAR and CASEY—has been undertaken by the Obama administration. The program works to break the cycle of hunger and food insecurity by getting at the root causes and helping countries develop their own viable agricultural sectors.

As Josette Sheeran points out, “for the first time in most people's memory we're in a post-surplus world. There is no surplus of food in the world and you have one bad drought or one bad flood . . . it will impact the price of food globally.”

In the meantime, the international community needs to step up to the plate in east Africa before it is too late. And the United States must continue to show moral leadership even in a time of stretched budgets.

International donors are meeting this week in Nairobi to try to raise \$1.6 billion to help with this crisis in Africa. I urge our friends and allies around the world to help do their part.

ALLIED INVASION OF SICILY

Mr. LUGAR. Mr. President, I rise today in recognition of the 68th anniversary of the Allied invasion of Sicily.

On July 10, 1943, under orders from GEN Dwight D. Eisenhower, the Fifteenth Army Group, comprised of GEN George Patton's Seventh Army and British GEN Bernard Montgomery's Eighth Army, began the Allied inva-

sion of the island of Sicily, termed Operation Husky.

Prior to the ground invasion, brave Allied pilots softened the Axis defenses with heavy aerial bombardment. In the early hours of July 10, Allied ground forces successfully landed on enemy shores with little resistance.

Over the next few days Allied forces continued on with much success. On July 11 and 12 enemy forces attempted numerous counterattacks, all of which were repelled by the skill and determination of the American forces. On July 22, an element of GEN Patton's Seventh Army captured the city of Palermo, the news of which so inspired the Italian people that on July 24 and 25 a palace revolt took place toppling the fascist government of Mussolini.

On July 31 Italian and German forces, faced with certain defeat, began a tactical withdrawal from Sicily.

One of the heroes of the action of July 31 received the Medal of Honor. Near Gagliano, Sicily, SGT Gerry H. Kisters, of Bloomington, IN, and nine other soldiers “. . . were advancing ahead of the leading elements of U.S. troops to fill a large crater in the only available vehicle route through Gagliano,” the award citation reads, and “. . . was taken under fire by 2 enemy machineguns. Sgt. Kisters and the officer, unaided and in the face of intense small arms fire, advanced on the nearest machinegun emplacement and succeeded in capturing the gun and its crew of 4. Although the greater part of the remaining small arms fire was now directed on the captured machinegun position, Sgt. Kisters voluntarily advanced alone toward the second gun emplacement. While creeping forward, he was struck 5 times by enemy bullets, receiving wounds in both legs and his right arm. Despite the wounds, he continued to advance on the enemy, and captured the second machinegun after killing 3 of its crew and forcing the fourth member to flee.”

For his actions under fire Lieutenant Kisters received our Nation's highest military award, the Medal of Honor.

Lieutenant Kisters, like so many Hoosiers before and since the Battle of Sicily, demonstrated the stalwart courage and self-sacrifice that is necessary to preserve the freedom and liberty that we all too often take for granted.

Lieutenant Kisters, in addition to receiving the Medal of Honor, also received a Distinguished Service Cross and a Bronze Star during WWII, not to mention his Purple Heart, and continues to be remembered and honored in Indiana, where last year July 31 was named Gerry Kisters Day in Bloomington, and in 1945 Monroe County Airport was dedicated as Kisters Field in honor of the Medal of Honor awardee.

As we recognize these historical events, I call attention to the 99,500 military personnel who today are on the ground in Afghanistan, with another 31,000 deployed to the region aboard ships at sea, on bases, and air